

PRINCE GEORGE'S COUNTY
HISTORIC SITE SUMMARY SHEET

Survey #: P.G. #70-47 Building Date: 1904

Building Name: Miller-Breakiron House

Location: 5520 Whitfield Chapel Road, Lanham, Maryland

Private/Residence/Occupied/Good/Inaccessible

Description

The Miller-Breakiron House is a two-and-one-half-story frame cross-gable house of cruciform plan. The principal east facade consists of a central two-bay gable front, with a cross-gable wing extending to the north and to the south. Entrance is into the south facade of the east-facing gable front, through a door with single pane transom and plain board surround. Wrapping all the way around both the north and the south wings are one-story hip-roof porches, supported by turned posts, with plain balustered railing. The porches rest on brick piers with shingle infill. The house is covered with German siding painted white. The third level of each of the four gable ends is sided with clipped-corner shingles, painted blue. The cornice is boxed with crown molding, and is not returned at the gable ends. There is a large brick chimney at the juncture of the cross-gable roofs. The building rests on a high brick foundation, which encloses a basement.

Significance:

The Miller-Breakiron House is a good example of a substantial early twentieth century vernacular dwelling of cruciform plan. It is distinguished by novelty shingling high in all gable ends, and open verandas on three sides of the axial wings. The subject house was built on property which had belonged to Mary L. Stevens, postmistress of "Lanhams" in 1879. In 1889 Mrs. Stevens sold Dr. J. Taber Johnson of Washington, D.C. part of the easterly section of her property. Dr. Johnson never built on his lot, but held the property for 15 years. In 1904 he sold the lot to Daniel B. Miller who had for nearly ten years lived in the Victorian cottage immediately to its west. Miller built on his new property a cross-gable vernacular dwelling, typical of those built in the early years of the twentieth century. It is a good representative of suburban homes of the period. Since 1950, it has been the home of the Breakiron family. It is today a noticeable landmark in the community of Lanham.

Acreage: 1.35 acres

Magi No.

DOE ___yes ___no

Maryland Historical Trust State Historic Sites Inventory Form

1. Name (indicate preferred name)

historic Miller House

and/or common Breakiron House

2. Location

street & number 5520 Whitfield Chapel Road ___ not for publication

city, town Lanham ___ vicinity of congressional district 5

state Md. county Prince George's

3. Classification

Category	Ownership	Status	Present Use	
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> district	<input type="checkbox"/> public	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> occupied	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> museum
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> building(s)	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private	<input type="checkbox"/> unoccupied	<input type="checkbox"/> commercial	<input type="checkbox"/> park
<input type="checkbox"/> structure	<input type="checkbox"/> both	<input type="checkbox"/> work in progress	<input type="checkbox"/> educational	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> private residence
<input type="checkbox"/> site	Public Acquisition	Accessible	<input type="checkbox"/> entertainment	<input type="checkbox"/> religious
<input type="checkbox"/> object	<input type="checkbox"/> in process	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: restricted	<input type="checkbox"/> government	<input type="checkbox"/> scientific
	<input type="checkbox"/> being considered	<input type="checkbox"/> yes: unrestricted	<input type="checkbox"/> industrial	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> not applicable	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> no	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> other:

4. Owner of Property (give names and mailing addresses of all owners)

name Donald Breakiron

street & number 5520 Whitfield Chapel Rd. telephone no.:

city, town Lanham state and zip code Md. 20706

5. Location of Legal Description

courthouse, registry of deeds, etc. P.G. Co. Courthouse liber WTD#5

street & number Main Street folio 571

city, town Upper Marlboro state Md.

6. Representation in Existing Historical Surveys

title None

date ___ federal ___ state ___ county ___ local

depository for survey records

city, town state

7. Description

Survey No. PG#70-47

Condition

☒ excellent
☐ good
☐ fair

Check one

☐ deteriorated
☐ ruins
☐ unexposed

☐ unaltered
☒ altered

Check one

☒ original site
☐ moved date of move _____

Prepare both a summary paragraph and a general description of the resource and its various elements as it exists today.

The Miller-Breakiron House is a two-and-one-half-story frame cross-gable house of cruciform plan. It stands on the west side of Whitfield Chapel Road in the railroad community of Lanham. It is a plain, substantial dwelling distinguished by wide verandahs and by novelty shingle cladding high in the gable ends.

The house faces east towards Whitfield Chapel Road; the principal east facade consists of a central two-bay gable front, with a cross-gable (axial) wing extending to the north and to the south. Entrance is into the south facade of the east facing gable front, through a door with single pane transom and plain board surround. There is a corresponding door in the south facade of the rear west-facing gable front. Wrapping all the way around both the north and the south wings are one-story hip-roof porches, supported by turned posts, with plain balustered railing. The porches rest on brick piers with shingle infill.

The house is covered with German siding painted white. The third level of each of the four gable ends is sided with clipped-corner shingles, painted blue; enclosed in this novelty shingling in each gable end is a small square window with plain board surround (white). Other windows are 1/1 double hung sash with plain board surrounds and wide board sills and lintels. Most windows have blue louvered shutters.

The cornice is boxed with crown molding, and is not returned at the gable ends; there is considerable overhang at the eaves. The gable roof is covered with gray shingle. There is a large brick chimney at the juncture of the cross-gable roofs. The building rests on a high brick foundation, which encloses a basement.

There is a shallow two-story hip-roof addition built onto the first bay of the west gable end. This addition is cantilevered above the high brick basement by means of heavy jigsaw brackets.

The ground slopes downward to the west. Northwest of the house is a small gable-roof stable with vertical board siding painted white, green asphalt shingle on its roof, and entrance into its east gable end. South of the stable is a small shed-roof chicken coop. South of the house, (unpaved) Stevens Lane runs westward to a few other houses. Immediately west of the subject house, and at a lower level is a long, modern, gable-roof garage and shed.

8. Significance

Survey No. PG#70-47

Period	Areas of Significance—Check and justify below			
<input type="checkbox"/> prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-prehistoric	<input type="checkbox"/> community planning	<input type="checkbox"/> landscape architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> religion
<input type="checkbox"/> 1400-1499	<input type="checkbox"/> archeology-historic	<input type="checkbox"/> conservation	<input type="checkbox"/> law	<input type="checkbox"/> science
<input type="checkbox"/> 1500-1599	<input type="checkbox"/> agriculture	<input type="checkbox"/> economics	<input type="checkbox"/> literature	<input type="checkbox"/> sculpture
<input type="checkbox"/> 1600-1699	<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> architecture	<input type="checkbox"/> education	<input type="checkbox"/> military	<input type="checkbox"/> social/
<input type="checkbox"/> 1700-1799	<input type="checkbox"/> art	<input type="checkbox"/> engineering	<input type="checkbox"/> music	<input type="checkbox"/> humanitarian
<input type="checkbox"/> 1800-1899	<input type="checkbox"/> commerce	<input type="checkbox"/> exploration/settlement	<input type="checkbox"/> philosophy	<input type="checkbox"/> theater
<input checked="" type="checkbox"/> 1900-	<input type="checkbox"/> communications	<input type="checkbox"/> industry	<input type="checkbox"/> politics/government	<input type="checkbox"/> transportation
		<input type="checkbox"/> invention		<input type="checkbox"/> other (specify)

Specific dates 1904 Builder/Architect

check: Applicable Criteria: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D
and/or

Applicable Exception: ☐ A ☐ B ☐ C ☐ D ☐ E ☐ F ☐ G

Level of Significance: ☐ national ☐ state ☐ local

Prepare both a summary paragraph of significance and a general statement of history and support.

The Miller-Breakiron House is a good example of a substantial early twentieth century vernacular dwelling of cruciform plan. It is distinguished by novelty shingling high in all gable ends, and open verandahs on three sides of the axial wings. It was built at the beginning of the twentieth century in the railroad community of Lanham.

The subject house was built on property which had belonged to Mary L. Stevens, postmistress of "Lanhams" in 1879. Mrs. Stevens owned part of the tract known as "Waring's Lot", and had two houses which fronted on the railroad just east of Lanham Station. It was she who in 1885 had provided to the School Commissioners land for the Lanham Schoolhouse.¹ In 1889 Mrs. Stevens sold to Dr. J. Taber Johnson of Washington, D.C., part of the easterly section of her property; this 1-9/6 acre lot was bounded on the east by the County Road (to Brightseat) and on the south by the school lot. Mrs. Stevens retained a twenty-foot-wide lane (along the boundary between Dr. Johnson's lot and the schoolhouse lot) which provided access to her houses from the County Road; her right-of-way survives today as Stevens Lane.²

Dr. Johnson never built on his lot, but held the property for 15 years. In 1904 he sold the lot to Daniel B. Miller who had for nearly ten years lived in the Victorian cottage immediately to its west. Miller built on his new property a cross-gable vernacular dwelling, typical of these early years of the twentieth century.³ Cruciform in plan, and enlivened by wrap-around verandahs and novelty shingling in the gable ends, it is a good representative of suburban homes of the period (cf. also the Edward Lancaster House, #71B-13). Since 1950, it has been the home of the Breakiron family. It is today a noticeable landmark in the community of Lanham.

Survey No. PG#70-47

PS-2746

MARYLAND HISTORICAL TRUST
STATE HISTORIC SITES INVENTORY FORM
Statement of Significance (continued)

Survey No. PG#70-47

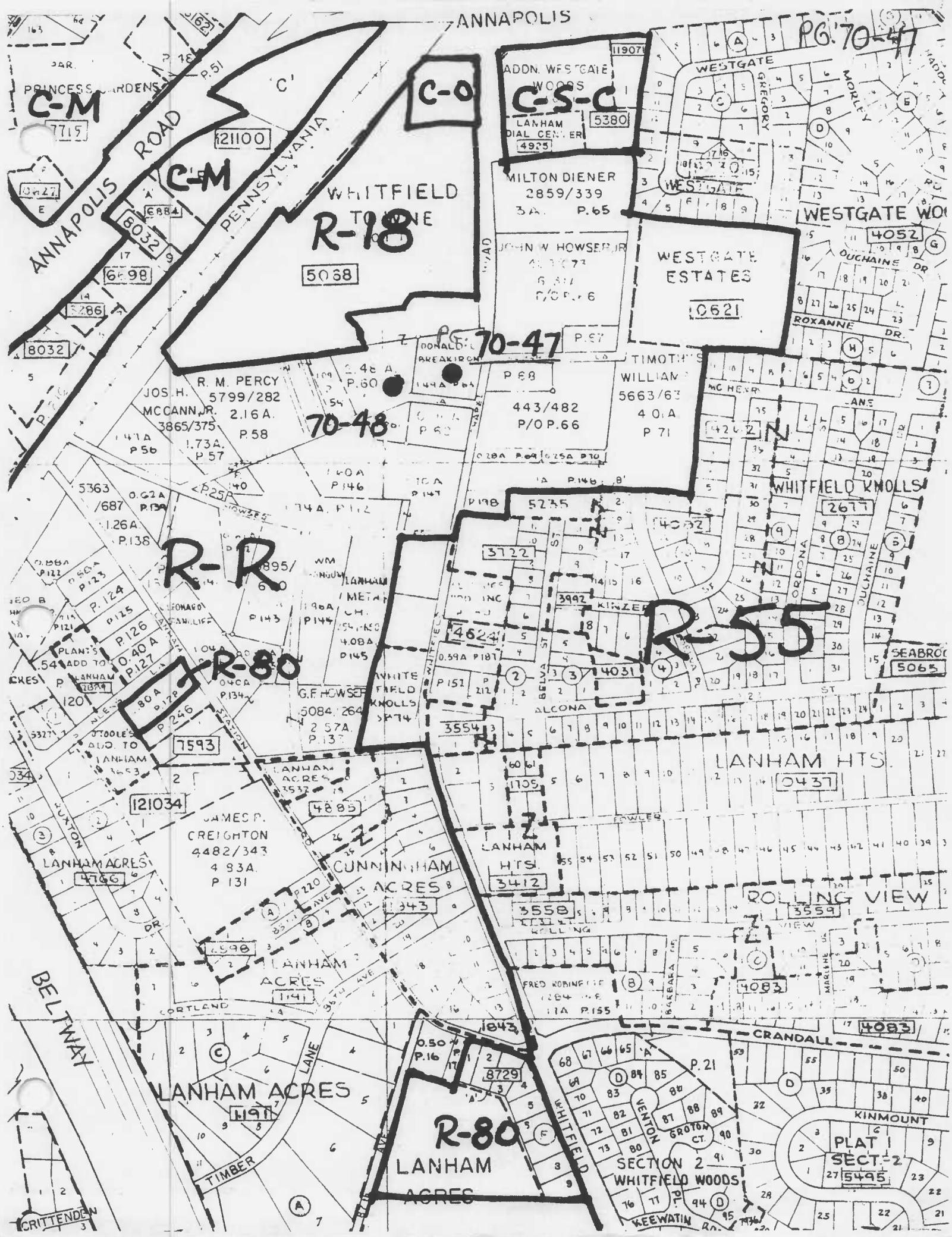
Section 8 Page 2

Notes

1 G. M. Hopkins Map of Vicinity of Washington, D.C., 1894; Prince George's County Tax Assessments, 1888-1900; Prince George's County Deed JWB #4:671.

2 Prince George's County Deed JWB #10:750.

3 Prince George's County Deed #17:508; Prince George's County Tax Assessments 1890-1910; cf. also MHT form P.G. #70-48, Miller-Christensen House.



ANNAPOLIS

PG. 70-47

C-M

C-O

C-S-C

WHITFIELD
R-18

WESTGATE
ESTATES

WESTGATE WOODS

R-R

R-80

R-55

R-80

LANHAM
ACRES

LANHAM HTS.

ROLLING VIEW

SECTION 2
WHITFIELD WOODS

PLAT 1
SECT. 2



PG#70-47

Miller-Breakiron House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
April 1986
Southeast 3/4 elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#70-47

Miller Breakiron House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
April 1986
North elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#70-47

Miller-Breakiron House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
April 1986
West elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD



PG#70-47

Miller-Breakiron House
Prince George's County, MD
Susan G. Pearl
April 1986
Southwest 3/4 elevation
Neg: Md. Hist. Trust, Annapolis, MD